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Pastoral ADVICES

A N D

DIRECTIONS;

In Order to a

VIRTUOUS LIFE here, and
ETERNAL HAPPINESS hereafter.

Intended more especially for the Use of the
PEOPLE committed to the AUTHOR's Care.

By WILLIAM NEWTON,
Vicar of *Gillingham* in DORSET, and Minister
of *Wingham* and *Stodmarsh* in KENT.

Brethren, my Heart's Desire and Prayer to GOD for
you is, that you may be saved, *Rom. x. 1.*

Preach the Word: be instant in Season, and out of
Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-
Suffering and Doctrine, *1 Tim. iv. 2.*

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit
yourselves; for they watch for your Souls, as they
that must give Account, that they may do it with
Joy, and not with Grief; for that is unprofitable
for you, *Heb. xii. 17.*

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B L



TO THE
P E O P L E
OF MY
C H A R G E.

❖❖❖ I ❖❖❖ T hath been my earnest
Desire, ever since the Care
of your Souls hath been
committed to me, to dis-
charge my Trust to the best of my
Power; and it is in Pursuit of this
Desire, that I now put these few
Advices and *Directions* into your
Hands. Had all of you been so

careful as you ought in attending the Public Worship and Service of God in the *Church*, there had been *less* need of my taking *this* Method for your Instruction; though even *then*, there would be this Advantage in it, that a *Book* lies always open before Men, when *Sermons*, if attended, are forgotten. But indeed there are too many among *you*, as in all other Parishes, grossly defective in this Matter; which makes some such *private* and *personal* Application as this, both proper and necessary. For, if the Preacher never so constantly and diligently *lifts up his Voice like a Trumpet*, he cannot *shew* those *People* their *Transgressions*, that fly out of the Reach of his Sound. The Laws for coming to Church have been superseded and slackened in Favour to the scrupulous *Dissenters*; and the wicked negligent *Absenters* have taken the Advantage,

Advantage, and plead Liberty of Conscience to stay at Home, and not serve God at all. They are not apprehensive of any Obligations, and Ties of Conscience, to the Service of God; and so make the LORD'S-DAY a Day of *Rest*, but not of *Religion*. And so far hath Blindness darkened the Minds of some, that they think it a great Obligation to the Minister, if they come and hear him; and if any Offence be taken, they totally forsake the *Church*, and sometimes *all* other Places of Divine Worship.

For the Service of *such* Persons as these, who do not give me the Opportunity of setting their Duty before them, with the rest of their Brethren, I principally drew up these Advices; but I have endeavoured to make them more generally useful,

and added such Things as are highly necessary to be seriously considered by *all* among you. Let me earnestly desire you, therefore, to *read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest*, what is here laid before you: Do not just look into it, and then throw it by, as if you had no Concern therein, but only to gratify a present Curiosity; but often read and consider the Book I now give you, as the best Counsel of one, who earnestly wishes and desires the Salvation of every Soul committed to his Charge; and is,

Your affectionate Monitor,

and faithful Servant,

June 18,
1726.

W. NEWTON.





PASTORAL ADVICES

AND

DIRECTIONS,

In Order to ETERNAL LIFE, &c.

❖ ❖ ❖ L ❖ ❖ ❖ E T me intreat you to be constant in the Practice of that great and important Duty of PRAYER to GOD; and not only by all proper Means to keep up a Spirit of serious and fervent Devotion throughout your whole Lives; but, as far as is practicable, daily to observe set Seasons and Hours for your Prayers. As soon as you arise out of your Bed in the *Morning*, begin the Day with the Performance of this Duty; and never close your Eyes at *Night*, till you have recommended yourselves to God's Favour and Protection.

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Our Saviour "spake a Parable to this
" End, that Men ought always to pray,
" and not to faint:" And *St Paul* re-
quires us to "continue instant in Prayer;
" and to pray without ceasing." Now,
the least that these Precepts can possibly
be supposed to oblige Christians to, is,
to pray unto God *Morning* and *Evening*;
which are Seasons the most of all in our
Power to employ as we think fit.

The Sense of your daily Wants, one
would think, should sufficiently excite
you to this Duty; since you stand in con-
tinual Need of God for the Pardon of
your Sins, the Aids of his Grace, and
the Protection of his Providence; and
Prayer is the appointed Means to derive
from Him every good and perfect Gift,
all Blessings Spiritual and Temporal.

What is there of Discouragement in
this Duty of Prayer, that should make
Men so averse to it as they generally are?
It requires but little of their *Time*, (for it
is not the Length, but the Fervor and
Sincerity of our Devotions, that God re-
gards) and there is no wearisom *bodily*
Labour in the Discharge of it, nor any
other

other Exercise of the spiritual Faculties, but what would be highly pleasant to us, were we in our primitive Perfection, or restored to a religious State of Mind; and you may be assured that he is utterly unfit for Heaven, that has no Delight to lift up his Mind thither.

Be careful, therefore, every Morning and Evening, to offer up your Prayers to God with Reverence and Affection, not in a formal careless Manner: Do not grudge the Time you give to God, for He can and will repay you. You must also take Care that your Children say every one their Prayers; which you must teach them early. When they can say the Words of some short Prayer, instruct them in the Meaning of it; and do the same for those Servants that are ignorant; for the rest, put them in mind of their Duty, and encourage them in doing it.

Hoping that you will every one of you in private, by himself alone, thus *duly* and *seriously* perform this Duty (without which you can never think that God will bless and prosper you) I shall next,

II. Recommend to all those that are *Parents and Masters of Families* among you, the Exercise of *Family Devotion*. This is absolutely necessary (as I have often told you) to preserve an hearty Sense of Religion in the World, and to procure the Blessing of God on you, and all that belongs to you. Where this Duty is generally and habitually neglected, a Family can scarce be esteemed a Family of Christians, or indeed, to have any Religion at all. And therefore the Prophet *Jeremiah* joins the Heathen and irreligious Families together: *Jer. x. 25.*
^{ss} Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen
^{ss} which know thee not, and upon the
^{ss} Families that call not upon thy Name.^{ss}
 A Family is a little Society united together under one common Head; and consequently they have some common Blessings to ask a Supply of from God, and some common Mercies to give him Thanks for: So that they are all *equally* concerned to unite their Hearts and Lips in Prayers and Praises to their heavenly Father.

Be persuaded therefore to bring Religion into your *Houses*; and some part of
 every

every Day, in the *Evening* at least, to call the Members of your several Families together, and pay your common Tribute of Prayer and Praise, for the Mercies you daily receive in common at the Hands of God; that so you may the better succeed in whatever Business you set about, and be the more safe in all the Dangers you are exposed to. For all our Success depends upon God's Blessing, and all our Safety is owing to his Protection.

III. Another Thing nearly related to this, which I would remind you of, is, the careful Instruction of your Children and Servants in the Principles of Religion. This is a Duty of great Importance, and expressly enjoined to *Parents* and *Masters* in Holy Scripture, ^{ss} I know ^{ss} him, ^{ss} (says God, speaking of *Abraham*) ^{ss} that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and ^{ss} they shall keep the Way of the Lord, ^{ss} to do Justice and Judgment, ^{ss} *Gen.* xviii. ver. 19. And *Joshua* declares, that ^{ss} as ^{ss} for him and his House he would serve ^{ss} the Lord, ^{ss} *Joshua* xxiv. 15. And *St Paul* enjoins ^{ss} Fathers to bring up their ^{ss} Children in the Nurture and Admo-
^{ss} nition

" nition of the Lord," that is, in the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion, *Ephes.* vi. 4. This is the Way to make your Children good and virtuous, when they grow up to be Men; to give you Comfort in them; and render them a Blessing to the Public. And if ever Times be better, Parents and Masters of Families must begin the Work of Reformation; in whose Power it is, in a good measure, by a careful Education of those under their Charge, to make the *next* Age, with the Blessing of God, (whatever just Complaints are made against *this*) " a Praise and Glory on the Earth."

Begin betimes, therefore, and continue unwearied in a godly Education of your Children, in all the Branches of it. Maintain your Authority over them, and yet do not deal imperiously with them, " provoking them to Wrath." Study their Tempers and Inclinations, that you may the better manage them. Teach them to serve God in private, and bring them, when they are capable of it, constantly to the Public Worship; that so they may be accustomed to the Exercise of Religion and Goodness by degrees,
till

till Holiness and Virtue have taken Root, and they be well settled and confirmed in a good Course. And not only instruct them by your Words, in the Service of God, but do what you can by your good Example to bring them to serve Him. By these, and such like Means, you may make your Houses little Seminaries of true Piety and Religion; you may^{ss} train^{ss} up your Children in the Way wherein^{ss} they should go, that when they are old^{ss} they may not depart from it.^{ss}

IV. That which I shall next press upon you is, a due Regard to the *Public* Worship of God in his own House. This is a Duty which all Christians, however they may differ from one another about the Manner of performing it, are agreed ought to be performed. The Public Worship of God is the great Instrument of promoting Religion and Virtue in the World; and as most of us owe what Share we have of these to it, so, if we observe the People that neglect *this* Duty, we shall generally find them a wicked and ungodly Race, who have no Regard to the other Parts of their Duty, but "live
" without God in the World."

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There is scarce any Body but may have Occasion sometimes to absent himself from Church; but for People to live Week after Week, nay, Year after Year, in the Neglect, or rather Contempt of God's Public Worship; to be utterly unconcerned about the Service of God; and neither regard Him, his Day, nor his Worship; to hear the Summons to Church every Lord's Day, and see others pass by their Doors to it, and yet loiter at Home, or about the Streets, without any Self-Reflections: I say, for Men to behave themselves in such a manner in a Christian Nation, and even under the Profession of Christianity, is Matter of Wonder and Astonishment, as well as of Grief and Sorrow. Whatever Pretences Men may make for living in this Manner, it is certainly utterly inexcusable. It is an Offence to God, and such as will be severely punished by Him. And though it were much to be wished, that the Fear of God, and a Sense of their Obligations to him, would engage Men to the Performance of this Duty, and that they need not be forced to it by the Fear of temporal Censures and Penalties; yet it may not be improper to add, that
it

it is an Offence against the Laws both of Church and State. For those indeed who duly go to other Assemblies for religious Worship, they are, by Law, excused from attending upon ours; but the Law was not made to encourage Irreligion, or to tolerate Men who will not worship God at all; but merely for the Ease of those who have entertained some Scruples about the Lawfulness of our Way of Worship; and there is no Reason such profane Apostates from God's Worship, as go no whither for that Purpose, should receive any Protection from it.

It may perhaps be objected, That the presenting and prosecuting such Persons, may become a Means to drive them to separate Assemblies; because, when they see a Necessity put upon them, of either going to Church or to such Places, it is most likely, that out of Resentment and Dislike to us, who put this Necessity upon them, they will rather choose the latter. To which I answer; That if any so prosecuted for their irreligious Contempt of God's Worship, do thereon go to separate Meetings, I cannot but think it is much better than living as they do; it is better they should serve God any
Way,

Way, than no Way at all : That is, I had rather they were of some than of no Religion ; and would worship God in any Congregation by Law permitted, if they will not (as they ought) do it in that which is by Law established.

But it is a sort of shameful Consideration, that Men should need to be forced to this Duty. Much rather would I awaken such Persons from their profane Sloth and Security, by convincing them, that this is the only Way to escape the Punishment that shall at last be inflicted on those, who now say unto the Almighty, " Depart from us, for we desire not " the Knowledge of thy Ways." Let me desire such Persons seriously to consider, whether any Thing deserves more of their Care and Industry, than to obtain eternal Happiness, and escape eternal Misery ? And yet this cannot be done without a sincere, devout Performance of all the Acts of religious Worship. Those Persons do not deserve to be God's Friends and Favourites, that do not worship Him ; and they are not capable of the Joys of Heaven, who relish not the Pleasures of Religion, and the Worship of God. " They, says the Psalmist, that
" are

“ are far from Thee, shall perish ; but
 “ it is good for me to draw nigh unto
 “ God.”

Some among you, perhaps, may endeavour to make yourselves easy in this gross Neglect, by imagining, that it is not the Place which makes our Prayers more or less effectual; but that God hears our Prayers wherever we pray, and that therefore you may worship God at Home, as well as at Church : But now, if you pretend to be Christians, and hope for Salvation in another Life, I would ask you, whether you can hope for that Salvation any otherwise than in the Way that Christ, our Lord and Master, hath appointed for the obtaining of it ? And is not this a main Part of Christ's Religion, that we should publicly, in the Face of the World, own his Faith, and join with the rest of his Members, in offering up the solemn Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise, and hearing his Gospel preached, and receiving his holy Sacraments ? How then dare any of you think yourselves at Liberty to neglect these Duties, on such Days as both God, and the Church, and the Laws, have most solemnly devoted and set apart for the Per-

Performance of them? Suppose any of you do really (as I fear is only pretended) spend your Time in private Prayer and Reading; yet you cannot reasonably expect that God should answer your private Prayers, when they signify a manifest Contempt and Neglect of his Public Worship and Service. There is Time enough allowed you by God for each of these Duties, that is, both for public and private Worship; and as you ought carefully to perform the latter, so you are no less obliged diligently to attend on the former. The Discharge of one Duty will not make Amends for the Neglect of another; much less for the Neglect of so important, so indispensable an one, as that of Public Worship; without which you excommunicate yourselves, and have no Right to be accounted Christians.

Let me earnestly exhort you all therefore, to let nothing but what is absolutely necessary, such as Disability by Age or Sickness, or Works of Necessity or Charity, (which will not admit of any other Time for the doing them) keep you at Home on the Lord's Day. Do not think it enough to attend the Public Worship of God as it were by Chance,
and

and when you have nothing else to do, once in a Month or a Fortnight, or not so often, (as with great Concern I see many of you do) but let coming to Church be esteemed by you a Duty, which you are constantly obliged to perform. It is a Sign of some very ill Principle or other, for any one to be much a Stranger at the House of God. Such a Man is certainly a bad Man, and never like to grow much better, till he reforms in this Particular. Every voluntary Omission of this kind is a grievous Sin, and must be severely accounted for at the last Day.

But let me add, that you must not only be constant at Church, but careful also that your Behaviour there be grave, sober, and decent, and suitable to the solemn Worship of God in his own House, and more immediate Presence. Whatever may serve to engage or express your Reverence and Attention, must not be neglected: such as *kneeling* at Prayers, *standing* at the Creeds, Psalms and Hymns, and the like. It is a Shame to see Persons *sitting* at Prayers, or carelessly looking about them, laughing, whispering, or talking in any Part of Divine Worship.

ship. These are Indecencies and Affronts unbecoming the Presence of an earthly Prince, much more the Presence of God.

Let me intreat you to endeavour to wipe off that Reproach of a cold formal Worship, (which the Enemies of our Church cast on the Public Service) by expressing, in every Part of your Behaviour, that grave, serious, and ardent Devotion, which so much becomes all the true Worshippers of God, and may be excited by the Public Offices of our Church; which are admirably fitted to serve all the Ends of a grave and serious Piety, if Men come to them, and behave themselves in them as they ought to do.

But whatever Care you have of your outward Behaviour, you ought to be especially watchful over your Hearts and Spirits, when you are engaged in God's Worship: For to " draw nigh unto God " with our Mouths, when our Hearts " are far from Him," is the highest Contempt of Him imaginable.

You

You should be infinitely careful, therefore, that your Prayers and Devotions do not degenerate into a cold Formality, and an heartless, or bare customary Performance of them; without that Ardency and Attention, without that earnest Desire to receive what you pray for, and to please God in all you do, which becomes, and is necessary, in those who approach the great Lord of Heaven and Earth.

In like manner, when you are speaking or singing God's Praise in Psalms and Hymns; you must be careful that your Hearts accompany your Voices; or, as the Apostle exhorts, that you "sing
" with Grace in your Hearts to the Lord;" and, after the Psalmist's Example, "let
" all that is within you bless his holy
" Name."

When the Word of God is either read or preached, you should not only give your Attention with Reverence, and "take
" heed how you hear," lest your Neglect be interpreted as a Contempt of the Authority that speaks to you; but hear it also with a Resolution of Mind to perform what you shall be convinced is your
Duty,

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Duty, and with a particular Application of general Instructions to the State of your own Souls, that you may ^{ss} grow ^{ss} in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our ^{ss} Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.^{ss}

V. Another Thing I think myself obliged particularly to exhort you to, is, a more *regular* and *solemn* Observation of the Lord's Day; for wherever this extensive Duty is neglected, a whole Tide of Wickedness will flow in at the Breach. And as ^{ss} God hath blessed this Day, ^{ss} and hallowed it; ^{ss} so they affront Him, and obstruct their own Mercies, who profane it. I do therefore earnestly and solemnly beseech all of you to take this Matter into your Consideration, and not to look upon the Observation of the Lord's Day as so inconsiderable a Duty, that a little Thing may excuse your Neglect of it; for be assured, great Matters depend upon it, even no less than your Improvement in Holiness here, and your eternal Happiness hereafter.

There seems too much Occasion for me to press this Duty upon you: There are some who shew no manner of Regard to this Day. You seldom or never see
their

their Faces at Church, or the least Appearance of Piety or Devotion among them: If they have any Business to do, any Journey to go, or the like, this must be the Day for it; though it might be, confessedly, as well done any other Day of the Week. Or if no Business offers, they either sleep, or drink, or talk, or walk away the Time, which others devoutly spend at Church, and in preparing themselves for another World. Nothing is so irksome and tiresome to them, as what God commands; no Time lies upon their Hands like that of this Day: They know not what to do with it; and wish, and say with those in the Prophet,
^{ss} When will the Sabbath be over, that
^{ss} we may set forth Corn? ^{ss} When will this lingering Day be past; that we may return to our Trades, our Husbandry, and secular Employments again?

There are others who seem to think it their Duty to go to Church, and be present at Divine Service, on this Day, (and in that they do well, and are to be commended; would to God that all People did so much as this!) but then they think that the Duty of the Day is over: They take no Care of their Families, or to employ

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employ themselves in private Meditation, Reading, or Praying ; but all the Parts of *Sunday*, vacant from Public Worship, are filled up with mere Idleness, santering at their Doors, in the Fields, or Corners of the Streets ; or perhaps are spent in downright Sin and Wickedness, in Acts of Debauchery, Tipling and Drunkenness.

Now, this partial observing the Lord's Day, as it is commonly managed, is but little better than a total Neglect of it. The Manner wherein such Men spend their Time, after they come from Church, intirely defeats any good Impressions that might possibly be made upon them there. Their Idleness, or unlawful Pleasures, effectually jostle the Word of God, which they have heard, out of their Minds, and make it of no Effect. How different is this Behaviour from the Account *Isaiab* gives of the true Observation of the Sabbath? *Isai.* lviii. 13, 14. ^{ss} If thou turn away thy ^{ss} Foot from the Sabbath, from doing ^{ss} thy Pleasure on my holy Day, and ^{ss} call the Sabbath a Delight, the holy ^{ss} of the Lord, honourable, and shalt ^{ss} honour Him, not doing thine own ^{ss} Ways,

33 Ways, nor finding thine own Pleasure,
 34 nor speaking thine own Words; then
 35 shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,
 36 and I will cause thee to ride upon the
 37 high Places of the Earth, and feed thee
 38 with the Heritage of Jacob thy Fa-
 39 ther; for the Mouth of the Lord hath
 40 spoken it.

Let me not be mistaken in any thing
 that hath been now said to you: Works
 of Necessity and Charity may and ought
 to be done on this Day; nor am I press-
 ing a precise and rigorous Observation of
 it; or for filling Peoples Heads with false
 and Jewish Notions of its Sanctification.
 Such is the State and Condition of Man
 in this World, that there are many little
 Works and Offices of Civil Life, required
 to a comfortable Subsistence, to a ready
 chearful Performance of religious Duties,
 and to an innocent Compliance with the
 Rules of Decency, Civility, or Huma-
 nity. And as far as these are subservient
 to, or consistent with our Duty, and not
 forbidden by our holy Religion, they are
 allowable.

Far therefore am I from desiring you
 to be nice and scrupulous about the

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Punctilios

Punctilios of the Lord's-Day Service ; but then I would guard against the contrary and more common Extreme, of a loose and negligent Observance of it. One stated Portion of our Time, one Day in every Week, has been, not only by the Rules of Christianity and the Law of *Moses*, but even by the Custom of all civilized Nations, set apart to a religious Use, and to the Offices of public and private Piety and Devotion. To the keeping up the Sanctity and Religion of this Day, we owe, in a great Measure, that the very Face of Christianity hath been preserved in the World : So that whenever it comes to be generally profaned and neglected, there will probably be an End of the *Power* and *Form* of Godliness together.

This Day therefore is, and ever must be, " holy unto the Lord." The Time allotted to the Church, should be there employed by you with Gravity and Seriousness, and all possible Devotion. You should not only go to Church yourselves, but carry as many of your Dependents with you as can be spared, and see that they behave themselves decently and reverently there ; part of the rest of this
holy

holy Day you should employ in private Prayer and Devotion, and in the religious Care of your Families; that is, in Catechising and Instructing Children and Servants; in reading the Scriptures, and other useful Books; in Prayer, singing of Psalms, or other pious Exercises; or indeed, in *all* these, in their several Courses and Order, as your Time will allow. The other Part may be allowed for such good Conversation or innocent Exercise, as may serve to refresh and enliven your Minds, and is consistent with Sobriety, Virtue, and Religion. But all unnecessary Business, and needless Journies; all haunting of Public Houses, and rude and riotous Assemblies, or idle santering in the Streets; all vain Sports and Pastimes, and indecent Liberties, (now too common in many Places) ought to be banished from every Part of this Day of Rest and Holiness.

In short: You should endeavour that your Carriage and Behaviour on this Day, be such as the Day itself is, serious, and yet chearful; sacred, and yet not superstitious; without indulging to Libertinism and Profaneness on the one hand,

or a Jewish and Pharisaical Rigour on the other; having always in view the End and Design of the Institution, which is, to promote God's Glory, and the Happiness of Men. But,

VI. I cannot omit to put you in mind of another important Duty of our holy Religion, that is, the frequent and devout Receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I may be excused in saying the less on this Head, because it has not only so often been the Subject of my public Discourses, (wherein I have represented the Nature of this Duty with all possible Plainness, and urged its Necessity, with a Vigour in some measure suitable to so great an Occasion; I have told you the Danger of wilful Neglect on the one hand, and the Benefits of a due Performance on the other; and have given plain and full Answers to the Objections that are usually made against discharging this Duty :) But though I cannot complain that these Endeavours have been altogether in vain, and to no purpose; yet I cannot but observe with great Sorrow of Heart, that too many of you remain still insensible and unconcerned,

cerned, and are not yet prevailed upon to render this easy, this delightful and beneficial Service to the great Redeemer and Saviour of Mankind.

This Neglect is too common among all Sorts and Degrees of People; but I observe it more general in two Sorts of them; that is, those that are young, and those of the poorer and meaner Rank; of both which Sort of Persons we see but very few, in Comparison, at the Lord's Table.

As to young Persons, the Church takes particular Care, that such of them, in every Parish, as are arrived to the age of sixteen Years, and have been, or are desirous to be Confirmed, should come to the Sacrament; being first instructed in the Nature and Design of this holy Institution, and the Obligation it lays upon them. And with very great Reason: For, since at this Sacrament they are to renew their Covenant made in Baptism, what can be more proper than that they come to it as early as possible, and there again devote themselves to the Service of God? Without this, they are

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Christians in Name; but not in Reality. What was done for them by others, in their tender Age, will not at all avail for their Salvation, unless, being thus come to Years of Discretion, they give their own Consent to it.

Let me therefore earnestly desire all young Persons to consider, that they are entering on a vicious World; where they will meet with innumerable Temptations to break their Baptismal Vow; that they carry about with them weak and corrupt Natures, prone to that which is Evil, and averse to that which is Good; that the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, will be their constant Enemies; which they cannot hope to encounter with Success, but by the continual Assistance of the Holy Spirit; and which they cannot hope to have, without the diligent Use of this, and the other Ordinance, appointed by God for the conveying of it to the Souls of Men; and if they are conquered by these Enemies, it will be to their certain and everlasting Ruin: They will be miserable in this World, and the next.

Let

Let us consider farther, that however youthful and healthful they may be at present, yet they know not how soon God may call them out of the World. They cannot but see Persons of all Ages, the young as well as the old, removed from their Acquaintance and Society continually; and nothing can secure to them a safe and comfortable Death, but their being resolved and stedfast Christians; which they cannot be esteemed, either by themselves or others, if, when they are by Age duly capable of it, they neglect this most solemn Institution of our holy Religion. But if it shall please God to prolong their Lives, the Course I am persuading them to will prove to their great Comfort as well as Safety; it will be the means of procuring them an happy Life on Earth, and eternal Glory in Heaven.

Some young Persons, perhaps, may abstain from the Lord's Table, out of a sinful Bashfulness; or for fear of the Reproaches of the World: But our Lord hath expressly told us, that if "any one" (young or old) shall be ashamed of him "and his Words," that is, of making a public Profession of his holy Religion,

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"in an adulterous and sinful Generation,
"of him he also will be ashamed when
"he cometh in the Glory of his Father
"and the holy Angels."

I therefore earnestly exhort all such young People as are piously disposed, (whether Servants or others) and who intend to lead a godly and Christian Life; to come betimes to the holy Sacrament; and I hope their Parents and Masters will not only excite and encourage them to this Part of their Duty, but assist and direct them also in the due Performance of it.

The other Sort of Persons, who are apt to neglect coming to the Sacrament, are those whose Circumstances are very mean and low in the World. These indeed are apt to be very careless of Religion in general; they cannot spare Time to worship God; for all the Time they have, is thought by them little enough to get Bread in, and provide for their Families; but however it comes to pass, this particular Duty of the Sacrament is thought not to belong to them, but designed only for the richer and better People

People of the Parish; and therefore most of them as carefully abstain, as if they were really prohibited from coming to the Lord's Table. But poor People should consider, that they are under the same Obligations with others to take Care of their Souls, and provide for Eternity; and consequently, have no Pretence to be excused from performing this, or any other Part of their Duty. The Command is universal; equally extending to all sorts and degrees of Men, who hope for Salvation by Jesus Christ—"This do in Remembrance of me." Our Saviour does not say, that some should do it, and others omit it; but he says, *Do this*, without any Restriction or Limitation; commanding the Observance of this holy Institution by all those (whether high or low, rich or poor) who expect to be saved by his Death and Sufferings. The pious Poor are equally the Favourites of our Lord, with the biggest of us all; and have therefore an equal Right to be entertained at his Table. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." And it was particularly prophesied of the Times of the Messiah,

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that the Poor especially should be made Partakers of the Blessings of the Gospel; "the Poor have the Gospel preached unto them." So that, let Mens outward Circumstances be never so mean, if in the inward Frame and Temper of their Minds, and the general Course of their Lives and Actions, they be truly pious and religious, fearing God, and working Righteousness, they may, nay, they ought to come to this Sacrament. As they are not upon that Account excluded, so neither will their Poverty be at all their Excuse, for neglecting this great and necessary Duty.

Let none of you therefore, (of what Rank or Condition soever you be) be any longer Strangers at the Lord's Table. There is little Reason to think you will ever make any Progress in Virtue and Goodness, till you bring yourselves to a frequent and constant Custom of coming to this holy Sacrament. Nor let any among you be discouraged from this Duty by unreasonable Apprehensions, or groundless Fears and Scruples, about the Danger of performing it. I have often told you, that every Man that sincerely

cerely endeavours to lead his Life as a Christian ought to do, may as safely at any time come to the Lord's Table, as he may come to Church to join in the other Parts of God's Worship. Those of you that pretend you are not fitted and prepared for it, should consider, that it is your Duty to be so; and if you are not prepared to receive the Sacrament, you are not qualified for God's Mercy here or hereafter; you are not prepared for the Happiness of Heaven, and can have no Hopes of coming thither: but if you prepare yourselves as well as you can, by a true Repentance for all your Sins and Miscarriages; by a sincere and firm Resolution to forsake them, and to do better for the future; to be more careful of all your Actions, and more constant in Prayer to God for his Grace to enable you to keep his Commandments; by being in Charity with all Men, and by forgiving those who have injured you in Word or Deed, as you hope for Forgiveness at the Hands of God; I say, if you thus prepare yourselves for, and come with such Dispositions to this holy Sacrament, God will certainly accept of you and your Services,
and

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and give you the Comfort and Benefit of this solemn Ordinance; that is, He will seal to you all those Blessings which are purchased and procured for us by the Death of Christ. But now,

VII. Lastly, most of the Duties I have before been recommending to you, being only the Means and Instruments of true Religion; that is, such Things as are necessary in order to the working in us so holy a Temper and Disposition of Mind, and rendring us so pure and virtuous in our Lives, as may qualify us for the Favour of God; and being not at all acceptable to him, when separated from this End: This, I say, being the Nature of these instrumental Duties, I must, in discharge of my own Duty, and in Faithfulness to your Souls, give this Caution, that you do not rely upon these Things alone for your Salvation, but take Care that they attain their proper End, and be the Means of making you truly good, virtuous and "holy in" all manner of Conversation: Prayer, Reading, and Hearing the Word of God, observing the Lord's Day, and receiving the Sacrament, are the Means appointed

appointed by God for improving of us in Holiness and Goodness; but we must not rest in the Use of these Means, and think ourselves religious merely upon this Account; for the Life of Religion does not consist in the bare Use of them, but in the real Efficacy of them upon our Hearts and Lives. " Not every
 " one, says our Saviour, that saith unto
 " me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the
 " Kingdom of Heaven, but he that
 " doth the Will of my Father which is
 " in Heaven."

You must therefore have an universal Regard to your Duty, and be defective in no part of it. You must not only be pious and devout with respect to God, but chaste, sober, and temperate with regard to yourselves; and just, faithful, and charitable towards all Men. You must mortify your Lusts, govern your Passions and your Tongues, and order your whole Conversation aright, or it is impossible you should see the Salvation of God. You must (as far as the Imperfection of this State will admit) practise every Virtue of the Christian Life, and avoid every Sin; but especially

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cially those Sins that do so generally abound in the World, to the Reproach of our Christian Profession, and the final Ruin of Mens Souls. Particularly,

You must keep strictly from profane Swearing and Cursing; for where these Sins are indulged, there is an End to all reasonable Pretences to Religion. It is the basest and silliest Thing in the World, for such as own the Being of a great and terrible God, to treat him with Scorn and Reproach. What can be more absurd, than to pray to God one Hour, and openly defy him the next? What can we think of those senseless, thoughtless Creatures, who own that they depend upon God for all their Enjoyments, and Hopes of this Life and that to come, and yet provoke him to his Face, and (for a Matter of no Concernment) do, in Effect, challenge Him to do his worst? This is a Sin so utterly without Temptation, so void of all the common Baits of Profit, or Pleasure, or Reputation, to intice you to it, that I would willingly hope there will be found no common Swearers or Profaners of the Name of God among you; and that you will not
only

only refrain from it yourselves, but give all just Discountenance to so heinous an Offence and Provocation, in all whom you observe guilty of it; especially your Children and Servants, and all those who are under your more immediate Inspection and Care.

You must also be particularly watchful against that loathsome Sin of Drunkenness, or Intemperance. This is a Vice not only so inconsistent with all Pretences to Christianity, but with all that is either honourable, pleasant or decent, that every reasonable Man must abhor it, as he would the Nature of an Ape, or a Swine. Besides the future Punishment of Drunkenness (for of Drunkards it is particularly declared in holy Scripture, that they "shall not inherit the Kingdom of God") it is at present most injurious to the Health of the Body, and the Faculties of the Mind, and brings Men to Want and Poverty; it ruins their Reputation and Character, and renders them incapable of doing any Good to themselves or others. So that if you value either your present or future Happiness, you must carefully avoid this

this Sin, and all Approaches to it, as the great Enemy of both.

Again: You must keep at the utmost Distance from Lewdness and Unclean-ness. These are Sins likewise not only highly offensive to God, and which will be severely punished by Him in the other World, ("for Whoremongers and Adul-terers God will judge)" but of fatal Tendency to the present Happiness of Men, and which introduce the greatest Disorders and Confusions into Civil So-ciety. This is so evident, that I need not go about to prove it. It is im-possible to number the Feuds and Mis-chiefs, the private Grievs, Sorrows and Uneasinesses, which this violent and headstrong Lust hath produced in almost every Place. It is a Sin justly scandalous and infamous among Men; it naturally tends to destroy the Health and Strength of the Body, and to consume the Sub-stance of those that indulge themselves in it. And it is a Sign of the great Corruption of the Age, and of Peoples being arrived to a desperate Pitch of Wickedness, that they are so ready, either through Custom or Impunity, or the Devil's

Devil's Infatuation, to make light of so great and complicated a Vice.

Though I think it proper to give you a Caution against these Sins particularly, as being too commonly practised in the World, and a great Reproach to our Christian Profession; yet you must not think yourselves at liberty to practise any other Vice, because you abstain from these gross Enormities. For by every known Sin, we do, as it were, run upon a Sword's Point, and endanger our Salvation, as much as a deep Wound in our Body would do our Life; and you know that one such may destroy a Man, as well as twenty. You must therefore (as I said above) have an universal Regard to your Duty, and be defective in no Part of it. You ought indeed to have a special Regard to those Duties which are more considerable, and wherein Religion does mainly consist; such as *Piety* towards God, *Temperance* and *Chastity* in regard to yourselves; *Truth* and *Justice*, *Goodness*, *Peace* and *Charity* toward all Men; but then no other Grace and Virtue ought to be neglected by you; but you must "abound in all the Fruits
" of

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" of Righteousness, which are by Jesus
" Christ, to the Praise and Glory of
" God."

These are the plain Advices and Directions I thought it necessary to lay before you, for the daily Conduct of your Lives in the Ways of Holiness and Righteousness, in order to your eternal Happiness. And that such a Behaviour as I have been recommending is necessary to that End, is Argument sufficient to engage any reasonable Man to it. The present Benefit and Advantage of a religious Life, is a Motive to the Practice of it, not to be overlooked or despised: But that it is absolutely and indispensibly necessary to our future, our eternal Happiness, and will most certainly procure it, is an Argument that cannot possibly be resisted by those who have the Reason and Understanding of Men, if they duly weigh and consider it. The greatest and most weighty Affairs in the World, are but a vain Employment, but a mere Trifling and Impertinence, in comparison with eternal Salvation. Our only true Interest, is the Interest of our Souls; we have
but

but one great Business in the World, properly speaking, and that is to make sure of our everlasting Happiness; and to secure to ourselves the Fruition of that excellent Good, which is the true End of our Being. This, as *Solomon* expresses it, is the *Whole Duty of Man*; that is, his only considerable Interest and Concern, and that upon which all depends. As to the Things of the World, a great Abundance of them is not necessary to our temporal Happiness; much less are they necessary to the great End for which we live. But it is most absolutely necessary, and of the last Importance, that we should attain to the Fruition of God, whose loving Kindness is better than Life, and without whom we cannot be happy. All the rest may be spared, but there is no dispensing with this *one Thing needful*. Should we lose all besides, and gain this, yet still we should be happy; and should we gain all besides, (all the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this World) and lose this, we should still be miserable. For what Gain can ever make Amends for such a Loss? * What shall it profit a * Man, says our Saviour, if he gain
the



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"the whole World, and lose his own
"Souls" Which is then only lost, when
it loses God, the everlasting Spring of
Joy and Happiness.

These Things I would urge upon you
in the Close, with all possible Earnest-
ness, to awaken in your Minds a due
Sense of the Importance of what hath
been before said to you; that all your
Inquiries may not be, (as they too com-
monly are) "what you shall eat, and
"what you shall drink, and wherewithal
"you shall be clothed;" but that you
may seriously and vigorously set your-
selves to "work out your own Salvation
"with Fear and Trembling." And may
it please the God of all Grace to give a
Blessing to these, and all my other En-
deavours for your Good; that we may
receive the End of our Labours and
Hopes, even the Salvation of all our
Souls; through the Merits and Media-
tion of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and
Saviour! *Amen.*

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